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ABSTRACT

This document discusses the importance of maintaining the quality of DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) occupational analyses and presents a 2-page checklist detailing DACUM quality performance criteria. The introduction to the checklist discusses various "infractions" discovered during an analyses of some curriculum/program developers' attempts to modify the DACUM process, including the following: unsuitable composition of "expert worker" committees; lack of definitions of criteria for job tasks/task statements; heavy dependence on outdated literature reviews; lack of high-quality duty and task statements; and failure to separate out worker behaviors, general knowledge and skills, and tool and equipment statements. The checklist, which is designed for use by secondary and postsecondary educators (including tech prep and school-to-work program developers) who are attempting to use and/or modify the DACUM occupational analysis process, contains a total of 54 criterion statements regarding the following elements of the DACUM process: structure of the DACUM committee, facilitator qualifications and certification; implementation of the DACUM process; formulation of duty statements, job tasks, and task statements on the DACUM research chart; and other information required on a DACUM research chart. (MN)

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MAINTAINING DACUM QUALITY

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It has been exciting to watch the expanding popularity of the DACUM occupational analysis process. Both in the United States and throughout the world, DACUM has found satisfied users among secondary and postsecondary educators, including Tech Prep and School to Work program developers, as well as among trainers in government, business, and industry. Much of the success can be attributed to trained facilitators, whose high standards and careful attention to procedures have contributed to the enhancement of thousands of educational and training programs.

It seems that the process is currently in wide use in the development of national standards. However, some users have gone so far afield as to have lost sight of the built-in quality standards of the true DACUM process. "Modified" DACUM is nothing new. In fact, we often have presented in the OPEN ENTRIES Newsletter descriptions of modifications that have been developed to suit special circumstances.

At a recent conference, however, this writer was somewhat shocked--and disappointed--to realize the extent to which the DACUM process was being modified--to its detriment. It turns out that numerous DACUM-style workshops are being facilitated by untrained facilitators and without much regard for the quality of either the process or the final product. Some of the procedures described were so far afield from recognized DACUM standards that they deserve a different name to describe them!

Among the "infractions" that turned up were (1) the unsuitable composition of "expert worker" committees, (2) lack of definitions or criteria for job tasks or task statements, (3) heavy dependence on outdated literature reviews, (4) lack of high-quality duty and task statements, and (5) the all-too-common failure to separate out worker behaviors, general knowledge and skills, and tool and equipment statements.

Far too often, task statements were unspecific and lacked appropriate qualifiers. For example, we cannot expect the instructor, curriculum designer, or other user to understand that task statements such as "develop a plan" and "maintain standards" mean "develop a floor plan" and "maintain sanitation standards." Nor can very different elements--worker behaviors, skill statements, tool and equipment standards--be mixed together with actual task statements and still yield a high-quality analysis and a solid foundation for curriculum development.

In an effort to address some serious concerns about maintaining the quality of this well-established process, we have developed a DACUM Quality Performance Criteria Checklist. Properly used, it can help facilitators (1) plan quality DACUM workshops, (2) evaluate both the process and products of these workshops, and (3) determine ways to improve both process and product to ensure that DACUM quality is maintained.

For more information on maintaining DACUM quality, contact Robert E. Norton, DACUM Program Director, CETE/OSU, 1900 Kenny Rd., Columbus, OH 43210; Phone (614) 292-4353 or (800) 848-4815, Ext. 4-7667; Fax (614) 292-1260.

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DACUM Quality Performance Criteria

Criterion Statements	Yes	No	NA
For each criterion, indicate status as Yes, No, or NA			
1. The DACUM committee was structured as follows: a. A total of 5-12 expert workers were selected b. A majority of the experts were actual workers (rather than supervisors or managers) c. Committee members were geographically representative d. Minorities were proportionately represented e. Small, medium, and large size companies were fairly represented f. Members selected were able to participate during the entire analysis g. A working occupational title and definition was used to guide committee member selection			
2. The facilitator was qualified through training and practical, supervised experience in all aspects of the DACUM process.			
3. The facilitator was certified competent in the DACUM process by a recognized agency.			
4. The DACUM process used included: a. A formal orientation of the committee to the DACUM process b. An initial brainstorming of the entire job/occupation c. Development of an organizational chart d. Identification of all the job/occupational duties (usually 6-12) e. Brainstorming of each duty to identify specific tasks f. Identification of all job/occupational tasks (usually 75-125) g. Obtaining a clear consensus of the committee on all duties and tasks h. Review and refinement of all the duties and tasks i. Sequencing of all the duties and tasks j. Identification of the general knowledge and skills k. Identification of all important worker behaviors (attributes) l. Identification of the tools, equipment, supplies, and materials used m. Identification of future trends/concerns likely to affect workers n. Listing and defining all acronyms and any unusual terms used in the research chart o. A review of and obtaining agreement on modifying the working occupational title, if appropriate			
5. The DACUM research chart produced contains **duty statements** which: a. Represent broad areas of work responsibility b. Begin with a descriptive action verb c. Contain an object (thing acted upon by worker) d. Contain a concise modifier (when appropriate)			

Criterion Statements	Yes	No	NA
6. The DACUM research chart produced contains **job tasks** which: a. Represent the smallest unit of job activity with a meaningful outcome b. Result in a product, service, or decision c. Represent assignable/delegatable units of work d. Have a definite beginning and ending point e. Could be performed over a short period of time f. Could be performed independent of other tasks g. Consist of two or more steps			
7. All of the DACUM research chart **task statements**: a. Began with a single precise action verb b. Contain an object that receives the action c. Contain a descriptive modifier d. Are explicitly and concisely stated e. Stand alone (are meaningful by themselves) f. Avoid references to knowledge needed g. Avoid references to supportive worker behaviors h. Avoid references to supportive tools and equipment i. Are listed only once (unless the specific difference in two similar tasks was made clear.)			
8. The DACUM research contains in addition to the duties and tasks the following: a. List of the general knowledge and skills required of workers b. List of the worker behaviors (personal traits and attributes) desired c. List of the tools, equipment, supplies, and materials used d. List of future trends/concerns e. List of acronyms and their definitions along with unusual terms (optional)			
9. The DACUM research **chart** contains descriptive identification information including the: a. Agreed upon job/occupational title b. Name of the developing organization c. Name of the sponsoring organization d. Names and affiliation of all committee members e. Name and affiliation of the facilitator(s) f. Location of the workshop (city and state) g. Dates the workshop was conducted			

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